

RE: CC Docket No. 02-6.

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Email Comment

Dear FCC,

In USACs annual draft eligible service list, video-on-demand (VOD) servers were listed as an ineligible service. I am writing to enter my sincere plea to the FCC to reconsider the eligibility status of VOD servers.

Today's youth often search for videos based on their interests on Web sites such as YouTube. They communicate with friends through instant and text messaging. Such technology has changed how young people learn and VOD is a crucial component to reaching today's youth and tapping into this new visual style of learning.

Take the Chicago Public School System, for example. Four years ago, the school system used eRate funds to collaborate with a video content and distribution partner to create a system that instantly gave teachers access to more than 1,000 videos of programming from sources such as PBS, A&E, Almanac, BBC, National Geographic and Scholastic. The videos are stored on a centralized server that allows districts to manage, store and show the videos.

Taking advantage of the visual learning patterns of today's youth, the program allows teachers to customize lessons plans and lectures to visually show the students key reference points. Teachers can upload quizzes, prepare students for tests and even teach their deaf students who before this program, would have been placed in a class for children with special needs. The concept is now being widely and successfully used in other districts.

The Chicago Public School system is not the only school that has been positively impacted by VOD.

In Kentucky, Fayette County Public School Systems uses the eRate program funds to stream video of AP courses that are not offered as a part of their curriculum. Students are able to use a two-way streaming conference solution to take courses in all major subject areas giving Fayette County students the same credentials as their urban counterparts when applying for college. This would not have been possible without eRate.

Clarke County Public School in New Jersey is another VOD success story. Clarke County used the eRate program to launch a virtual high school which offers students synchronous and asynchronous instruction across a wide range of subject areas, including core course content, advanced and remedial courses, Advanced Placement courses and electives. The district has even allowed students to develop some of the virtual high school's content, including flash-based simulations for driver's education and English courses. The virtual high school is a major success story in Clark County and is credited with lowering the district's dropout rate a full percentage point.

The way students of today learn is drastically different from children of ten years ago. Video is a vital part of their everyday living and as such, should be an integral part of their education.

The success stories speak for themselves. VOD has been able to capture young minds, open their eyes to new ideas and more importantly, keep them engaged and committed to their education. By removing VOD from the eligible service list, the FCC and USAC will be leaving countless numbers of youth, who live in areas where advanced placement courses, the zoo and museums are not readily accessible, at a distinct disadvantage.

It is my hope that the FCC will keep schools such as those in Chicago, Kentucky and New Jersey in mind when considering USACs proposal. These schools are a shining example of how VOD servers are transforming education and should be listed as an eligible service for the eRate program. The futures of millions of disadvantaged students are counting on you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Timothy B. Malone

MCPc, Inc.